

SAMPLE SPEECH FOR PRESIDENT'S DAY

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today. It is an honor to speak on a day when we mark the birth of two transformational figures in our nation's history: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

Washington fought to secure our independence. Lincoln fought to bring the principles of our independence to every American. Both men offered their lives in service to their country, and in defense of human liberty.

As a nation, we cannot reflect upon who we are and what we stand for without first reflecting upon the lives of these two great men. Their story is the great American story – one of ordinary individuals rising to extraordinary heights of leadership and sacrifice.

Both men carried with them a boundless hope in the promise of this great country, and an uncompromising faith that Providence had ordained them to lead during the age in which they lived. Such hope and faith is always a source of inspiration, especially during times of great challenge.

It appears as though the challenges of our own time multiply with each passing day. The public confidence in our institutions has been shaken and remains unsteady. Without a doubt, we live in difficult times.

Each passing week thousands of workers are losing their jobs, and losing the ability to provide for their families. Many watch as their retirement savings continue to dwindle, and their income insecurity continues to grow. Homes, once considered safe havens and safe investments, are plunging in value or being foreclosed. And the ability to purchase a new home is still outside the reach of so many.

And on the international scene, our enemies continue to plot against us and wait for the right moment to strike. Dictators throughout the world continue their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, to use for their own evil ends or to empower the evil ends of others.

The world looks to America and wonders whether we will continue to stand as that shining city on a hill, or whether the light of our influence has faded into history.

Well, I don't believe it has. I believe America's best days are still to come. To be a Republican you have to have an enduring faith in the future. This faith helped carry Ronald Reagan through the height of the Cold War, and would contribute to the demise of the Soviet Union.

And this faith carried Abraham Lincoln through the Civil War, and would preserve our Union. In fact, there is very telling story by General Dan Sickles, an officer who served in the Union army, who told of a conversation he had with President Lincoln immediately after the Battle of Gettysburg.

Lincoln told General Sickles that when the battle was underway he fell to his knees, and prayed, asking the Lord for victory in the battle.

Lincoln concluded, "I don't know how it was, and I cannot explain it, but soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul. The feeling came that God had taken the whole business into His own hands and that things would go right."

Some doubt this historical account, but it sure sounds like the Lincoln we've learned about and love. Most of us just can't shake that enduring faith, expressed by Lincoln in the depths of a civil war, that somehow things will go right.

This is the American legacy, a legacy that stretches back to our founding. And I believe it will be the legacy of our generation as well.

Over the past few weeks and months some have tried to relate the story of our new president with the one who served in the same office nearly 150 years ago. While most of the comparisons are stretched, I certainly believe the election of President Obama honors the sacrifice of Lincoln and the cause for which he died.

As an American, I wish our new President all the best, and hope for our country's success. But that does not mean I will always agree with the President on what are the best policies for the country.

When Republicans believe certain policies of the Administration or of the Democratic Congress will do more harm than good, you can expect Republicans in Congress to stand in principled opposition, and to provide what we believe is a better solution.

That is why over the last several weeks, Republicans have been united in our opposition to the "stimulus" plan that has moved its way through Congress. I agree that our economy is in turmoil and the Congress must take action to provide relief, but where we differ is in defining the action that must be taken.

Some believe that we can spend our way back to prosperity; that there is no level of government intervention that is unacceptable. Republicans disagree.

It was clear the Democratic stimulus bill was designed to simply stimulate more government and more debt. Providing \$50 million to the National Endowment for the Arts does not help the worker recently laid off, or the family facing foreclosure on their home.

I opposed the Democratic spending plan and supported the Republican plan which would provide immediate tax relief to working families, and small businesses. A married couple filing their taxes jointly could save up to \$3,200 on their taxes. We also provided additional relief to the unemployed, and a tax deduction to help cover the costs of health care.

This is just one area where you can find Republicans standing in principled opposition to policies that would expand the size of government, and hurt our economy. Another issue deals with children's health care. I firmly believe, and so does every Republican in Congress, that we must do all that we can to provide basic health care to children living in near-poverty.

That is why a Republican Congress, with the support of President Clinton, created the SCHIP program back in 1997. I continue to support the program today, and its original intent.

But I do not support expanding this program to the middle-class, and forcing low-income individuals to pick up the tab and I opposed the Democratic bill that would do just that. Government should not be forcing individuals off of private health care just to get them on to a government run program.

Recently, President Obama signed an executive order which requires the use of taxpayers' dollars to support abortions performed over-seas. I strongly oppose this policy for a simple reason: American taxpayers should not be forced to fund activities they believe are morally objectionable. A recent poll shows that nearly 75 percent of Americans agree.

This new spending and these new government programs are not free. They carry a cost that the American taxpayer must pick up. At a time when our economy is in turmoil and American families are hurting, it is unconscionable to grow the size of government and the tax burden on working families.

In the coming weeks and months, Congress will begin debating the budget for the current and upcoming fiscal years. There is perhaps no better time to learn about the national priorities of each respective party, or their vision for the future of the country.

Already we are hearing reports that the Democratic leaderships promises a \$500 billion spending boondoggle that will get us through just this year. This on top of the hundreds of billions of dollars spent on government programs in the recent stimulus bill.

While Speaker Pelosi and her liberal allies in Congress push for more government, and more spending, Republicans will present an alternative that checks the growth of government, provides real stimulus to our ailing economy, and delivers needed relief to working families and small businesses. We will do this because it is in the best interests of our country, and it is the spirit of our good party.

Early in his political career and early in the life of the Republican Party, President Lincoln spoke of the great work done by our founding fathers in establishing a government of liberty and equality. Lincoln said that our task was to faithfully transmit this gift to the last generation. To do so, was an act of "gratitude to our fathers, justice to ourselves" and a "duty to posterity."

We face this crisis and the future as one nation, and only as one nation will we find the solutions to renew the promise of our great country. For the sake of our children, it is time we got to work.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be with you today, and for the opportunity to serve you in Congress.